UNITED NATIONS

CEDAW

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Distr.
GENERAL

CEDAW/C/SR.321
12 March 1998

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

Sixteenth session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 321st MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 20 January 1997, at 3 p.m.

Chairperson: Ms. KHAN

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97-80144 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES UNDER ARTICLE 18 OF THE CONVENTION (continued)

Initial report of Slovenia (CEDAW/C/SVN/1) (continued)

1. At the invitation of the Chairperson, Ms. Koman-Perenič (Slovenia), Ms. Kozmik (Slovenia) and Ms. Neubauer (Slovenia) took places at the Committee table.

2. Ms. KOZMIK (Slovenia), replying to questions raised by members of the Committee at an earlier meeting, said that her country, which had succeeded to the treaty obligations of the former Yugoslavia, had disseminated the text of the Convention to all public institutions, and to non-governmental organizations and individuals. Awareness-raising was an important task of the Office for Women's Policies, since its inception in 1992, the Office had disseminated a variety of publications on issues affecting women.

3. Under the socialist political system, a large number of women had held political office but real power had been concentrated in the hands of a few individuals, mostly men. The current system was very competitive, and more must be done to improve women's participation in political life. In the elections to the National Assembly held in 1990, 1992 and 1996, women had represented 17.9 per cent, 14.8 per cent and 17.1 per cent of the candidates, and 15.0 per cent, 13.3 per cent and 7.8 per cent of the elected deputies, respectively. The parliamentary Committee for Women's Policies was composed of 13 deputies, including four men.

4. The Office for Women's Policies was an independent government advisory body which had been established to oversee progress towards equal rights and opportunities for women and men in all areas. Its activities included monitoring the status of women in Slovenia and the enforcement of their rights as guaranteed by the Constitution, the laws and the international conventions to which Slovenia was a party; analysing proposed legislation; and conducting research and preparing documentation. The Office had a staff of eight and a budget of approximately $350,000. It was empowered to initiate legislative action by participating in joint working groups with independent experts and government officials. Its recommendations were addressed to the Government and must be taken into consideration in the drafting of proposed legislation. The establishment of the Office, rather than a ministry of women's affairs, reflected a compromise between the party in power and parliamentary women's groups, which had seized the opportunity to establish national machinery for women's rights without waiting for the legislative changes that would be needed in order to establish a new ministry. Nevertheless, among the priorities that had been identified in a draft national programme for promoting gender equality was the mainstreaming of gender equality within all government policies and the strengthening of existing machinery.

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5. The Office was responsible for the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women.

6. Ms. KOMAN-PERENIČ (Slovenia) said that the basic legal provisions prohibiting all forms of discrimination against women were laid down in articles 14 to 65 of the Constitution, which regulated the relationship between individuals and the State and between individuals. The right to work was guaranteed by article 49 of the Constitution, which prohibited discrimination in employment. Marriage and the family were governed by articles 53 and 54 of the Constitution. The mutual rights and obligations of parents and children were in conformity with the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Children born out of wedlock had the same rights as children born within marriage. Both the mother's and the father's role were recognized by law. Much legislation which predated the current transition was in need of revision.

7. The Constitutional Court decided on cases involving conflicts between domestic law and international agreements, among other matters. The Constitutional Court had not yet considered a case involving the Convention.

8. The role of ombudsperson had been established by the Constitution with a view to protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms. The ombudsperson supervised relations between State bodies and public authorities, on the one hand, and private citizens on the other hand. On the basis of the experience gained so far, a proposal for the designation of a gender equality ombudsperson would be included in the national programme for promoting gender equality.

9. The Penal Code referred to "offences against sexual integrity", which could also be committed within marriage. Only the victim could report such offences to the police and the public prosecutor and initiate criminal proceedings. Both the Penal Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure treated violence within the family as a crime. In cases involving domestic violence, the victim could obtain protection orders. As to the penalties, article 185 of the Penal Code provided for sentences of imprisonment of 15 days to 20 years. In the case of procurement, which was a criminal offence, harsher penalties were provided for the procurement of juveniles than for adults.

10. Ms. KOZMIK (Slovenia) said that her Government and the Office for Women's Policies were well aware of the various constraints and obstacles to the achievement of full equality for women. Nevertheless, the positive experience of European and other countries in the implementation of affirmative action could not simply be transferred to Slovenia. The effects of new legislation must be assessed in the light of the current economic transition.

11. Research had shown that the problems of minority women were no different from those of other women. The Constitution protected national minorities against discrimination and guaranteed them special rights with regard to language, education, the media, and so on.

12. As the various types of family patterns in Slovenia were recognized and treated equally by law, the growing number of single-parent families was not a major concern. Parents were responsible for children regardless of the parents' relationship.

13. The primary-school curriculum included a course on ethics and society for pupils in classes 5 to 8. There was no special course on family life for pupils in the lower grades.

14. In recent years, the Office for Women's Policies had organized a number of discussions on family policy, with special emphasis on the problem of reconciling family and work responsibilities. The image of women in the media had also been considered. The Office had encouraged the media and advertising agencies to refrain from presenting women as sexual objects. The success of those efforts was reflected in a new code adopted by the Advertising Chamber to promote the use of non-sexist and non-stereotyped images of women and men. Greater public awareness of offensive and degrading stereotypes had resulted in the withdrawal of several advertisements.

15. In the past 10 years public discussion of domestic violence had broken down the wall of silence previously surrounding the issue. Non-governmental organizations had set up 12 helplines for victims of abuse. The Office cooperated with such organizations and assisted them in various projects. It had also organized a round-table discussion on violence against women; several of the proposals made on that occasion had been included in draft legislation. Special attention had been paid to raising young people's awareness of the issue of violence.

16. Both official and informal statistical data showed that most victims of domestic violence were children and women. Such violence was difficult to detect, prevent and punish, as it was considered a private matter. Physical and sexual abuse often went unreported.

17. Police officers were well trained in dealing with victims of domestic violence. Women had the right to be examined by a female police officer, a female doctor, and so on. Regular programmes were carried out to sensitize and educate persons working in that area.

18. Sexual harassment was a new issue in her country. The Office for Women's Policies had stimulated public debate on the subject and planned to carry out further awareness-raising activities in 1997.

19. According to governmental and non-governmental estimates, there were from 1,500 to 2,000 prostitutes in Slovenia. Prostitution was not a criminal offence, but procurement was. Legislation had been proposed to legalize prostitution, protect prostitutes and provide them with social security and health care; progress was slow, however, because the absence of street prostitution limited concern about the issue. Most prostitutes came to Slovenia from other Eastern European countries and worked officially as dancers and nightclub entertainers.

20. The Office for Women's Policies had initiated a public debate on the issue, stressing the need for research and information. The media had done a great deal to raise awareness concerning prostitution.

21. As to the so-called sex industry, while the availability of pornography had increased under the new system, that did not appear to be a cause for concern.

A proposal to regulate access to pornography was being considered. There were no national television programmes or magazines with a pornographic content.

22. With regard to women's participation in political decision-making, it must be borne in mind that Slovenia had been an independent State for only five years. Under the previous political system, quotas for representation of various population groups had brought many women into representative bodies, but those bodies were not where the decisions were made. Moreover, democratization had reopened the door to traditional and conservative values. In addition, although there was separation of church and State, the Catholic Church and its values exerted an influence on public opinion. The political environment was still in a state of flux: in the most recent Parliamentary elections, 25 parties had contended for seats, with seven currently represented.

23. Ms. KOMAN-PERENIČ (Slovenia), in reply to questions concerning the judiciary, said that women were treated fairly and equally in the Slovenian judicial system. Sixty per cent of all judges, who were elected by Parliament rather than appointed, were women. In the higher courts, 46 per cent of judges were women and the number had increased steadily over the past four years. Of the civil, commercial and penal chambers of the high courts, two were led by women. Furthermore, in the penal chamber, previously dominated by men, more than one third of the judges were women. In the Supreme Court, there were nine women judges out of a total of 31. Since the total number of women students at faculties of law had reached over 60 per cent, an increase in the number of women judges could be expected in the future.

24. Ms. KOZMIK (Slovenia), responding to questions on article 8, said that women's participation in diplomacy was increasing. Among the 40 heads of diplomatic missions of the Republic of Slovenia, 8 were women. A new Department of Diplomacy had been established in the university as a joint study programme of the Faculty of Social Sciences and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; half its students were women.

25. Turning to questions regarding article 10, she said that the basic principles governing education were covered in a "white book" on education issued in 1995 by the Ministry of Education and Sport. Education on human rights and equality was among the basic principles included. Pre-school programmes were gender-neutral, and educators in pre-school institutions took specially designed courses on human rights and gender equality, financed by the Ministry of Education and Sport, to learn how to teach those topics to children at that age level. Such topics were also included in optional courses and extracurricular activities at the primary and secondary levels. Technical courses and home economic courses, which were optional, were attended by both boys and girls.

26. With regard to the feminization of some professions, the most obvious reason for it was gender division of social roles. The traditional division of labour in the private sphere had an effect on such patterns in the public sphere in general. Primary socialization also had a role to play. To improve that situation, an educational policy aimed at encouraging girls and women, as well as boys and men, to enter non-traditional fields was included in the draft national programme for gender equality. The situation was improving to some

extent, largely because of educational efforts beginning at the pre-school level. Among other proposed measures were gender guidelines for curriculum. Slovenia did not yet have an institute of women's studies or gender studies, but the University of Ljubljana did offer several courses in the field at both undergraduate and post-graduate levels. In the Faculties of Philosophy and Social Sciences, an increase in gender-related topics for degree theses had been noted, which confirmed the need for a more systematically organized academic programme in that area. Several projects were under way, including an analysis of gender roles as portrayed in primary school textbooks. The national programme for gender equality had recommended the establishment of a gender studies research institute, and the Office for Women's Policies was supporting research projects, on women's history in Slovenia in the 1980s and on violence against women.

27. In contrast to other post-communist countries, Slovenia had a well-organized day-care system for children, which had been established in response to the high percentage of employed women and the rapid industrialization which had occurred under socialism. There was also a well-organized informal day-care network which covered the majority of children not in kindergartens. The number of full-day primary schools had declined sharply since the 1980s, but a system of "after-school" programmes had replaced them to some extent.

28. Under the new Education Act, vocational training had been made part of compulsory education. There would be both two-year vocational schools and three- to four-year secondary vocational school programmes, with a practical training component organized in cooperation with factories and businesses. Students in practical training received health and pension benefits. Beginning with the 1993-1994 academic year, the College of Internal Affairs had been opened to women, and in 1994-1995 they had made up 46 per cent of the student body. Proposals to allow women to study in the School of Internal Affairs at the secondary level were part of the national programme for gender equality. In general, the number of students receiving a non-university degree was decreasing because that level of education no longer satisfied the demands of the labour market of the 1990s.

29. With regard to questions posed on article 11, Slovenia was undergoing a transition period where it was attempting to harmonize all its legislation in the labour area. The Labour Relations Act was expected to be the first bill submitted to Parliament by the new Government. Rather than pass a separate equality act, equality provisions would be made an integral part of all future labour legislation. The Office for Women's Policies was aware of the principles of equal pay for equal work and equal pay for work of equal value, and was giving special attention to them in discussions on new employment legislation and job classifications.

30. Approximately 55 per cent of trade union members were women, but they were not organized into special women's groups, except in the journalists' union, and had not reached leadership positions. As part of its employment policy, the Government provided support for job-creation programmes and programmes for those entering the job market, but there was no particular policy for women. Men represented 65 to 70 per cent of all self-employed persons.

31. Earlier retirement for women than for men had been seen as a way to recognize and remunerate women's double burden of full-time employment along with responsibilities for child care, caring for the elderly and the households. At any rate, earlier retirement was not the cause of lower pensions for women: the pension system compensated 35 years of service for women at the same level as 40 years for men. Maternity leave and parental leave were fully paid and recognized as ordinary service time, and therefore did not affect the level of pension. One of the proposed amendments to the new labour legislation would equalize retirement ages for women and men.

32. With regard to the use of language in announcements of job vacancies, non-sexist use of language was recognized not only as a right but as an obligation. The Office for Women's Policies had organized a round table on the elimination of sexist use of language and had demanded that feminine forms for all professional titles should be established. Stereotypes in the sphere of family life and responsibility for children created a significant barrier to equal opportunity. One important goal was to change employers' views so that they would not only look on women as mothers, but would also accept that men were fathers with a full range of family responsibilities. A new proposal on parental leave would provide 105 days maternity leave to be used only by a mother, 90 days of paternity leave for a father or 180 days of parental leave to be shared between the parents.

33. Part-time work was not common in Slovenia, and the Office for Women's Policies had on several occasions stated that it opposed part-time work for persons taking parental leave in the hope of avoiding the Western European experience that it was mostly women who engaged in part-time work. Temporary employment meant employment for a fixed time period of varying duration. It applied to periods usually lasting not more than a year for both women and men. The number of women employed on a temporary basis might be higher, as that type of employee was often used to replace persons on maternity or parental leave.

34. The overall unemployment rate had grown in the period from 1986 to 1993, reaching 7.3 per cent in 1995. Since 1994, unemployment among women had increased; nevertheless, the proportion of women unemployed was still lower than that of men. Special attention would be paid to the issue of long-term unemployment (over a year). The proportion of women among long-term unemployed was 47.5 per cent. Many women had difficulty entering the labour market because of employers' expectations that they would leave their positions owing to family responsibilities.

35. Ms. NEUBAUER (Slovenia) said that she would present additional information and clarifications on questions relating to women's health (art. 12). The transition process had affected the national health insurance scheme and the health care system as a whole. Despite cutbacks, however, the share of public spending for health care had grown from 7.3 per cent of GDP in 1992 to 7.8 per cent in 1994. The share of private expenditure for health care had also increased.

36. Concerning the feminization of health care professions, the majority of health care providers were indeed female - 53.7 per cent of physicians and 63.1 per cent of dentists. Moreover, enrolment in schools of medicine,

dentistry and pharmacy showed that women would predominate in those professions in the future. In the high school for health care professions, only 31 of the 596 students enrolled in 1995-1996, were male. The predominance of women was viewed as a reason for low wages in health care fields, and demands for higher wages and recognition of special status for medical doctors were among the causes of the April 1996 strike of dentists and doctors.

37. With regard to concerns on occupational health, the Law on Fundamental Rights and Labour Relations protected male workers under the age of 18 and all female workers from reproductive hazards. The laws on job safety were holdovers from the previous political system and gave total protection to workers as owners of the means of production. The new legislation, which was in the course of preparation, would be based on the European system.

38. Educational programmes at all levels, from primary schools to curricula for health care professionals, included education and information on violence, reproductive and sexual health issues and the health-related risks of substance abuse and addiction.

39. Age disaggregated statistics on cervical and breast cancer and cardiovascular diseases would be included in the second periodic report, as well as information on infertility. A screening programme for early detection of breast cancer was envisaged in the health care plan, which was awaiting confirmation by parliament.

40. Slovenia was experiencing difficulties in collecting data on women's health because of changes in methodology; consequently the monitoring of national trends was no longer possible. Modernization of the database would be carried out in the near future. No change had been observed in the trends of hormonal contraceptive use. The incidence of induced abortions showed a continuous decrease in all age groups and regions of Slovenia. Termination of pregnancy after 10 weeks' gestation had to be approved by a special committee of medical doctors and was permitted only if it was less dangerous to the woman than continuation of the pregnancy. Fetal sex selection was not allowed; prenatal fetal diagnosis was used when amniocentesis or blood tests were positive for genetic and neurodegenerative diseases. The average number of sterilizations had increased slightly; in 1995 there had been 2,659 requests for sterilization, over 95 per cent from women, mostly mothers of two children. Sterilization was permitted only after the age of 35.

41. Ms. KOZMIK (Slovenia) said that according to the 1991 census, almost half the population of Slovenia was living in rural areas, but the agricultural population accounted for only 7.6 per cent of the total population. The proportion of women was almost equal to that of men, and the average size of farm families was 3.7 persons. According to research on 780 farms, women owned 17.5 per cent of family farms and were co-owners of 28.2 per cent of farms.

42. In 1982, the right to maternity leave had been guaranteed to women farmers who were members of agricultural cooperatives. Under the new law on family support income, of 1993, farmers who paid old age and disability insurance contributions had the same rights to parental leave as other workers; if they did not pay contributions, they were entitled to parental benefits. Farm

children had the same right to child benefits as other children. Women farmers had equal access with men to all types of credit.

43. In the majority of farm households, housekeeping tasks were performed by the wife. In half the households, responsibility for child care was not specified in advance or was shared among the household members. In a third of the households, childcare was the mother's job. According to data in the study "The Quality of Life", 1996, the rural population had fewer facilities than the urban population in respect of school and childcare, health care, culture and recreation, transport and communications, and food supply establishments.

44. Ms. GONZÁLEZ-MARTÍNEZ said that the statistics on the abortion rate in Slovenia showed a total for 1995 of 20.8 per cent; she asked whether that figure was a percentage of all women of child-bearing age.

45. Ms. SCHÖPP-SCHILLING said that she had some concerns about the issue of the family as a private sphere. Under socialism, there had been many encroachments into the family, and there could now be a danger of regarding the family as a completely separate entity. Slovenia must be careful to ensure that conservative policies of the Western world did not encroach on its equal opportunities legislation under cover of protecting the privacy of the family.

46. Although the large number of women judges was impressive, they would not necessarily work for equal human rights for women; women judges should be educated about the opportunity they had to go forward in solidarity with other women and review legislation to identify direct and indirect discrimination.

47. The Government of Slovenia did not seem to be concerned about the prevalence of single-parent families; however, since such families had only one income, if any, there was a risk that they would slide into poverty, especially if they were headed by women.

48. On the question of the lack of women in parliament, a massive education campaign was needed to educate women about politics; women needed to take their fate into their own hands and to understand that women's issues were political issues, not social issues.

49. Affirmative action was needed in the diplomatic service to ensure that dual appointments were made and that there was no discrimination against women with children.

50. Education was another area for affirmative action; gender-neutral structures were only a first step; greater emphasis needed to be placed on educating teachers about the problems of sexist teacher-student interactions and sexist curricula, and stereotypes must be counteracted among boys and girls. It was a matter of concern that such a high proportion of pre-school children were not enrolled in formal settings; grandmothers might provide loving care, but were likely to prolong stereotypes. Even a few hours a day of non-sexist socialization would be worthwhile to help counteract early stereotypes. She urged the Government of Slovenia to increase the number of formal child care places.

51. The Government of Slovenia should institute heavy penalties for discrimination in employment. Further information was needed on self-employment; women should be encouraged to start up small businesses and should be taught how to do so.

52. The modernization of the database for health care must be accelerated, so that it would be possible to develop health care programmes.

53. She hoped that the Government of Slovenia would publish the Committee's concluding comments and have them discussed in the press and in parliament.

54. Ms. BARE said that on the subject of temporary employment, she was concerned that employers were tending to recruit women to fill gaps and thereby avoid paying benefits and giving promotions; that meant that women were again suffering discrimination. A study should be undertaken to see how prevalent the practice was and formulate measures to prevent its continuation.

55. Ms. Yung-Chung KIM said that the representative of Slovenia had indicated that the feminization of health care professions resulted from lower wages in that field; she asked whether the same applied to the judiciary, since wherever there were more women, wages tended to go down, and whether anything would be done to deal with that problem.

56. The CHAIRPERSON, speaking in her personal capacity, said that more information was needed about health insurance, the double burden of housework and paid employment shouldered by women, domestic violence, and whether the high proportion of women in the health care professions made health care more accessible or more affordable to women.

57. Ms. KOZMIK (Slovenia) said that her Government would prepare the second periodic report over the course of 1997 and would provide answers to all the additional questions.

58. Ms. Koman-Perenič (Slovenia), Ms. Kozmik (Slovenia) and Ms. Neubauer (Slovenia) withdrew.

WAYS AND MEANS OF EXPEDITING THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE (continued)

59. Ms. CARTWRIGHT said that now that the Committee had two sessions a year, it needed to be much more systematic and efficient in its work. It should select the reports to be considered at least one year in advance, as the experts needed to receive them sufficiently early to be able to provide comments and suggestions to the post-session working group. Questions should be formulated by the post-session working group so as to give reporting States parties and non-governmental organizations ample time to prepare for presentation. To avoid the situation of the post-session working group working hard on reports which when the time came were not actually presented, there would have to be a very clear system.

60. The analysis by the Secretariat, which at the current session had not been available until the session had started, should be much simpler than in the past; members of the Committee should be provided with concluding comments, the

full text of all reservations entered by States parties, and comments by the Secretariat on whether any reservations had been removed or amended. The analysis could then be provided well ahead of time.

61. At post-session working group meetings, the practice of not considering initial reports of States parties should be continued, otherwise there might not be sufficient time for the groups to consider all the other reports. Furthermore, there was a need to establish a good relationship with States parties making initial reports. She strongly supported the idea that members of the Committee should specialize in certain areas; each year the experts should be asked which areas they wished to specialize in, without being restricted to those areas.

62. Ms. CORTI asked for clarification of the responsibilities of a post-session working group, since the Committee had taken no decision on whether to organize a pre-session or post-session working group meeting.

63. Ms. CARTWRIGHT said that the purpose of a post-session working group meeting would be to prepare questions on the reports to be considered at the next session. Those questions would then be sent to the States parties concerned, so that the Governments and non-governmental organizations could incorporate their answers into their introductory statements before the Committee.

64. Ms. SCHÖPP-SCHILLING said that more systematic preparation on the part of both the Committee and the Division for the Advancement of Women would save time. For example, in the case of Slovenia's report, if the Committee had received the written answers to its questions ahead of time, it could have devoted the current meeting to a constructive dialogue with the Slovenian delegation instead of merely hearing the answers read out. She asked the Division for the Advancement of Women to provide Working Group I with a list of the reports that could be considered at the next two sessions and a list of all States parties whose initial reports were long overdue, along with information on what the Secretariat had done over the years to remedy that situation, such as sending reminders and offering technical assistance. That would help the Committee devise measures to deal with States parties which did not take their reporting obligations seriously.

65. Ms. GONZÁLEZ MARTÍNEZ said she agreed that having the pre-session working group meet after the session instead would give the Committee a head start on its work on the next set of reports to be considered, and that the Committee should submit its questions to States parties much further in advance. However, that change must be considered carefully, since the Committee was not autonomous, but must abide by the rules of the United Nations and work within its allotted time-frame and resources. With respect to the suggestion that the Committee members should specialize in certain articles of the Convention, she agreed that such a division of labour could expedite the Committee's work and ensure adequate coverage of all articles. However, many of the articles dealt with issues which were interconnected and could not be clearly separated, such as health, violence and education. The Committee should consider the system used by the Committee on the Rights of the Child, which submitted its questions and comments on the initial reports of States parties five to six months before

its session, thus enabling those States to send their replies ahead of time so that they could be translated and studied by the Committee members. That system could also be used for subsequent periodic reports of States.

66. Ms. FERRER GÓMEZ said that she had doubts about the advantages of specializing by articles, since nearly all of the articles of the Convention were interconnected. Such an approach could impoverish the Committee's analysis of the implementation of each article. Instead of dividing up the articles among the Committee members, it would be better to allow members who took a special interest in certain areas to focus on those issues.

67. Ms. SHALEV said she agreed that all human rights were indivisible and interconnected. However, as the Committee was the largest of all the human rights treaty bodies, it ran the greatest risk of repetition in its questions to reporting States. Specialization would not impoverish the discussions, since its purpose was to focus the analyses and make better use of the Committee's time by ensuring that comments and questions were not repeated; Committee members would still be free to relate their areas of specialization to other articles if they wished, and to speak on any points which were of special interest in the context of a given country report.

68. Ms. OUEDRAOGO said that more discussion was needed before the Committee could decide whether to adopt the proposal to specialize by articles of the Convention. In her years on the Committee, she had noticed that too much time was spent on the presentation of periodic reports, to the detriment of constructive dialogue. She hoped that the proposal to organize a post-session working group meeting would enable States to submit their answers to the Committee's questions in advance, so as to allow time for the issuance of translations (the lack of which limited the contributions of some Committee members) and to enable the Committee to outline the main points to be covered in the dialogue even before the reports were formally presented.

69. Ms. BUSTELO GARCÍA DEL REAL said that specialization by articles of the Convention would ensure that all articles were adequately addressed. Articles which were particularly wide-ranging, such as article 11, could be covered by more than one member of the Committee. Specialization would be a good way to organize the Committee's work to ensure that States' reports were considered systematically, rigorously and efficiently.

70. Ms. TALLAWY said that the Committee could not hold both pre-session and post-session working group meetings, since its budget provided for only one such meeting per session. Since the working group had already met prior to the current session, the Committee would have to find a non-traditional way to prepare its questions on the reports to be considered at the July session, so that replies would be received far enough in advance. Subsequently, it could organize post-session working group meetings on a regular basis.

71. She agreed that there was a need for more real dialogue with States parties, as the current system of posing questions and later hearing the answers read out at length was monotonous and did not allow for much substantive interaction with Governments. She supported the idea of specialization, since it would focus the Committee members' efforts and enable them to explore the

whole range of problems and questions in each area. In addition, some members could be in charge of making general observations and asking questions on each country's overall legal framework and reservations to the Convention, while other members could be responsible for examining the replies of non-governmental organizations and specialized agencies.

72. Ms. ACAR said that the idea of specialization was attractive, but could force the Committee to devote equal time and effort to every article in the context of every country report, even though the areas requiring attention varied by country. She hoped that the Committee could devise a way to overcome that problem.

73. Ms. SCHÖPP-SCHILLING said that the question of which areas to target in each periodic report could be determined on the basis of the issues identified at the pre-session or post-session working group meetings. That would ensure that the Committee did not waste time examining areas which were not problematic in a given country. Once the priority areas for each country had been determined, the relevant articles would be allocated to the Committee members.

74. Ms. CORTI said she agreed that Working Group I must begin as soon as possible to consider the list of countries to be covered at the next session.

75. Ms. TALLAWY said that Working Group I would need not only the list of countries, but also a list of the ideas proposed at the current meeting and possible procedures for submitting questions to States parties and receiving replies prior to the July 1997 session.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.